

Introduction to Philosophy

(PHIL-2300-004)

Spring 2019

Professor: Daniel Giberman

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Office Hours: by appointment (email me at least 24 hours before requested time)

Section: 004

Time and Place of Class Meetings: T/Th 3:30-4:50, Preston Hall 200

Description of Course Content: This course is an introductory partial survey of western analytic philosophy and its history. Some of the questions to be explored include the following. *What factors, if any, determine which actions are morally right? Under what conditions do we know anything about the world around us, or even ourselves? What criteria determine that you are the same person as someone who existed yesterday? Can the physical sciences account fully for mental phenomena? How is change over time possible? What criteria determine whether something is possible?* While exploring these and other questions, the course will emphasize clarity in thought, argumentation, and writing. Readings range from Descartes and Hume to Mill and Russell to Lewis, Perry, and Haslanger.

Student Learning Outcomes: Students will learn to reason and write clearly about central philosophical topics. In doing so, they will learn to engage, critically examine, and charitably interpret the arguments and theses of the philosophical works read in the course. Moreover, they will develop the skills of critical thought and argumentation generally. The success of these projected outcomes will be assessed by student performance on argumentative essay assignments as well as exams that test for factual comprehension and logical reasoning. These outcomes, if successful, will contribute to virtually all future endeavors in which the student will be asked to exercise careful reasoning and clarity in thought and communication, whether in law, medicine, business, journalism, science, engineering, other humanities, the arts, or daily life.

Required Textbooks and Other Course Materials:

Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings, 8th Edition.

J. Perry, M. Bratman, and J.M. Fischer (Eds.) Oxford: OUP 2019 (hereafter "PBF")

- Additional required texts (marked below with "**") will be accessible by URL or Blackboard.

Descriptions of Major Assignments and Examinations:

Two short essays (approximately 1000 words each)

Midterm exam (multiple choice, short answer, short essay)

Final exam (similar to midterm)

Attendance: Students are expected to come to every lecture on time and fully prepared by having carefully read the assigned text(s) for that lecture (see below section on expectations for out-of-class study). I do not plan to take attendance, though see below on how participation may affect one's final course grade. University students are adults and tuition is expensive. If it's not worth it to someone to show up, it's not worth it for him or her to show up. That said, I will give pop quizzes occasionally to ensure that students are reading the assigned material before lecture. Quiz grades will be part of participation assessment.

No Screened Devices: Students are not allowed to use screened devices (laptops, tablets, phones, etc.) during lecture. Exceptions will be made only for students who have a compelling and independently established reason to use such devices for learning purposes (for (non-exclusive) example: students with appropriate disability documentation).

Grading:

Short Paper #1/Short Paper #2 (50%)

[Of the two paper grades, the lower will count for 10% of final course grade, the higher for 40%.]

Midterm (20%)

Final (30%)

Participation (TBD--can shift your final course grade up or down by as much as 5%)

Expectations for Out-of-Class Study: Students should prepare for each lecture by giving the corresponding reading assignment at least two hours of careful reading, i.e. focused, sustained, and perhaps repeated reading in a quiet setting, with questions and objections noted. Students should expect to spend at least 15-20 hours *outside class* on each short paper and another 15-20 preparing for each exam. These estimates are in addition to the time required to read the course material in preparation for each lecture.

Course Schedule:

Philosophy (of the academic, western, analytic variety)

Jan. 15: Introduction

- No assigned reading

Jan. 17: Basics of Logic

- John Perry/Michael Bratman/J.M. Fischer, "Logical Toolkit" (PBF 8-13)

Jan. 22: The Value of Philosophy

- John Perry/Michael Bratman/J.M. Fischer, "Philosophy" (PBF 1-7)
- Bertrand Russell, selection from *Problems of Philosophy* ("The Value of Philosophy" PBF 17-20)

Ethics

Jan. 24: Introduction to Normative Ethics

- Stephen Darwall, "What is Philosophical Ethics?"* pp. 3-8 (pdf on Blackboard)
- Shelly Kagan, sections 1.2 and 1.3 from Ch. 1 of *Normative Ethics** pp. 7-16 (pdf on Blackboard)

Jan. 29: Utilitarianism

- John Stuart Mill, "Utilitarianism" (PBF 532-548)

Jan. 31: Deontology

- Immanuel Kant, "Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals" (PBF 583-599)

Feb. 5: Utility, Duty, and Famine

- Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality" (PBF 575-582)

Feb. 7: Short Paper #1 Assigned

- Thoroughly read "Writing Philosophy Papers" (PBF 14-16)
- Thoroughly read <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>

Feb. 12: Meta-ethics

- Stephen Darwall, "Meta-Ethics: The Basic Questions"* (pdf on Blackboard)
- Gilbert Harman, "Ethics and Observation"* (pdf on Blackboard)
- Get started on Paper #1! (make an outline, begin a first draft, think of objections...)

Epistemology

Feb. 14: Plato's Allegory of the Cave from *The Republic* (PBF 165-169)

Feb. 19: Cartesian Doubt I

- Rene Descartes, *Meditations* I and II (PBF 170-175)

Feb. 21: Cartesian Doubt II

- Rene Descartes, *Meditations* V and VI (PBF 184-193)

Feb. 26: Knowledge

- Edmund Gettier, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?"* (www.jstor.org; login with MavID)

Feb. 28: Induction

- David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Section IV (PBF 225-231)
- **(Short Paper #1 due)**

Mar. 5: Review for midterm

Mar. 7: MIDTERM EXAMINATION

Mind

Mar. 19: Mind and Body

- Gilbert Ryle, "Descartes's Myth" (PBF 282-289)
- David Armstrong, "The Nature of Mind" (PBF 290-297)

Mar. 21: Minds and Machines

- John Searle, "Minds, Brains, and Programs" (PBF 335-348)

Mar. 26: Phenomenal Consciousness

- Thomas Nagel, "What is it Like to be a Bat?"* (jstor.org)

Mar. 28: The "Hard Problem" of Consciousness

- Jaegwon Kim, "Consciousness and the Mind-Body Problem"*, selection from his *Philosophy of Mind*. pp. 301-311 (pdf on Blackboard)
- Frank Jackson, "What Mary Didn't Know" (PBF 303-306)

Metaphysics

Apr. 2: Personal Identity I

- John Perry, *Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality* (PBF 349-356)

Apr. 4: Personal Identity II

- John Perry, *Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality* (PBF 356-369)

Apr. 9: Personal Identity III

- Bernard Williams, "The Self and the Future" (PBF 370-380)

Apr. 11: Persistence Through Change I: Temporal Parts/Perdurantism

- “Paradox of Identity” (PBF 842-843)
- David Lewis, excerpt from *On the Plurality of Worlds** (pdf on Blackboard)

Apr. 16: Persistence Through Change II: Endurantism

- Sally Haslanger, “Endurance and Temporary Intrinsics” (pdf on Blackboard)

Apr. 18: Modality I

- Alvin Plantinga, “Modalities: Basic Concepts and Distinctions”* (pdf on Blackboard)

Apr. 23: Modality II

- David Lewis, excerpt from *On the Plurality of Worlds** (pdf on Blackboard)

Apr. 25: Short Paper #2 “workshop” (**Attendance Mandatory!**)

- Bring a completed first draft of short paper #2
- Be prepared to share your thesis/arguments with the group for feedback

Apr. 30: Wrap-up

- **(Short Paper #2 due)**

May 2: Review for final

[FINAL EXAM is at whichever time/place the university schedules.]

Note: *I reserve the right to adjust this schedule in any way that serves the educational needs of the students enrolled in this course.* DG

University Policies:

Attendance: At The University of Texas at Arlington, taking attendance is not required but attendance is a critical indicator in student success. Each faculty member is free to develop his or her own methods of evaluating students' academic performance, which includes establishing course-specific policies on attendance. As the instructor of this section, [insert your attendance policy and/or expectations, e.g. "I will take attendance sporadically" or "I have established the following attendance policy: ..."] However, while UT Arlington does not require instructors to take attendance in their courses, the U.S. Department of Education requires that the University have a mechanism in place to mark when Federal Student Aid recipients "begin attendance in a course." UT Arlington instructors will report when students begin attendance in a course as part of the final grading process. Specifically, when assigning a student a grade of F, faculty report the last date a student attended their class based on evidence such as a test, participation in a class project or presentation, or an engagement online via Blackboard. This date is reported to the Department of Education for federal financial aid recipients.

Drop Policy: Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance.** Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://www.uta.edu/aao/fao/>).

Disability Accommodations: UT Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including *The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*, *The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA)*, and *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act*. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of disability. Students are responsible for providing the instructor with official notification in the form of a **letter certified** by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD). Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Students experiencing a range of conditions (Physical, Learning, Chronic Health, Mental Health, and Sensory) that may cause diminished academic performance or other barriers to learning may seek services and/or accommodations by contacting:

The Office for Students with Disabilities, (OSD) www.uta.edu/disability or calling 817-272-3364. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability.

Counseling and Psychological Services, (CAPS) www.uta.edu/caps/ or calling 817-272-3671 is also available to all students to help increase their understanding of personal issues, address mental and behavioral health problems and make positive changes in their lives.

Non-Discrimination Policy: *The University of Texas at Arlington does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, genetic information, and/or veteran status in its educational programs or activities it operates. For more information, visit uta.edu/eos.*

Title IX Policy: The University of Texas at Arlington ("University") is committed to maintaining a learning and working environment that is free from discrimination based on sex in accordance with Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), which prohibits sex discrimination in employment; and the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE Act). Sexual misconduct is a form of sex discrimination and will not be tolerated. *For information regarding Title IX, visit www.uta.edu/titleIX or contact Ms. Jean Hood, Vice President and Title IX Coordinator at (817) 272-7091 or jmhood@uta.edu.*

Academic Integrity: Students enrolled all UT Arlington courses are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington's tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.

I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code in their courses by having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents' Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university's standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student's suspension or expulsion from the University. Additional information is available at <https://www.uta.edu/conduct/>.

Electronic Communication: UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

Campus Carry: Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. Under the new law, openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/news/info/campus-carry/>

Student Feedback Survey: At the end of each term, students enrolled in face-to-face and online classes categorized as "lecture," "seminar," or "laboratory" are directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student's feedback via the SFS database is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. Students' anonymity will be protected to

the extent that the law allows. UT Arlington's effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law and aggregate results are posted online. Data from SFS is also used for faculty and program evaluations. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

Final Review Week: for semester-long courses, a period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

Emergency Exit Procedures: Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.

Active Shooter: The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by UTA Police regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. <https://police.uta.edu/activeshooter>

Student Support Services: UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include [tutoring](#), [major-based learning centers](#), developmental education, [advising and mentoring](#), personal counseling, and [federally funded programs](#). For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to resources@uta.edu, or view the information at <http://www.uta.edu/universitycollege/resources/index.php>.